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## MELTON WRITES FROM HIS CELL IN CABANA.

### The Imprisoned Correspondent Tells of His Life in the Spanish Prison.

#### For a Year He Has Been in the Fortress—Over Forty of His Fellows Have Been Executed.

It is within a few days of a year since the Competitor prisoners were locked in Cabana Fortress, across the bay from Havana. They have been sentenced to death, relieved and are still awaiting the decision of the Spanish Government for their fate. Among them is one Ona Melton, an Arkansas lad, whose sole connection with the Competitor was as a newspaper correspondent. He never bore arms against Spain nor had he any purpose more than reporting the war from the Cuban camps.

He has been treated as a prisoner of war. When the first summary Spanish court-martial considered the cases he was condemned to death with the others.

The Journal has been endeavoring to secure the young correspondent's release, and the Government at Washington is moving.

There is reason to hope that Ona Melton will be set at liberty soon—a tardy act of justice to a man whose mission would have been recognized as lawful by any civilized country, excepting Spain, in the world.

Following is a sketch of his prison life, written by himself in his gloomy cell in the old fortress.

Cell No. 41, Fortress La Cabana, April 7, via Port Tampa, April 14.—We are among the oldest inhabitants of this prison. Perhaps not more than a dozen out of the five hundred confined here have been here as long as we have. Those that were here when we came have been garroted, shot or transported to the African penal settlements. A very few have been set free. Only those awaiting a decision are kept here. We come under that melancholy classification. There are about two hundred political prisoners in these cells, and about as many Spanish soldiers committed for infractions of military discipline. The rest are criminals, the scum of Cuba.

The criminals are not separated from the political prisoners, but are divided among all the cells. Yesterday two murderers, who were confined in a cell full of political prisoners, were taken out and garroted. Criminals are garroted and political prisoners shot.

Since I have been imprisoned here nine assassins have been garroted and forty-two prisoners of war have been shot for rebellion. We can see the prisoners as they are taken out to the place of execution and hear the volleys.

During the last few weeks no political prisoners have been shot, but during the last six weeks of the Cleveland Administration prisoners were executed regularly twice a week, and we were told that it was done because Cleveland wanted the rebellion put down quickly, and the reforms enforced.

There are twenty-four cells or calabozos in Fortress Cabana. Their dimensions are 20x30 feet, and the description of one is a description of all. They are vaulted, and the only openings are a barred door and window at one end. The doors are of concrete, the cells are damp, as the sunlight cannot penetrate within them.

A pair of shoes hung on the wall will become white with mildew within a few days. The prisoners who are able to procure them sleep in hammocks; those who are not sleep on the damp concrete floors. Spain furnishes neither cots nor bedding for her prisoners. If they are without friends or money they must lie on the stones.

There is a narrow passage or prison yard in front of the cells, enclosed by a lofty wall that almost entirely shuts out the light.

By standing close to the barred door or window one can see a tiny line of sky over the wall.

The prison walls are about five feet thick; the prison is the centre of the fortress and is encircled by three lofty parallel lines of walls, making escape impossible.

There is no account of any one ever escaping from this prison. The prisoners are never allowed outside of their cells except under heavy guard.

Convicts from the Havana Carcel bring water to the prisoners, which is poured through the barred doors into tin pails on the inside; they also sweep the narrow prison yard twice a day.

The food or "rancho" is also passed inside to the prisoners through barred doors. We receive two rations each day consisting each time of a tiny loaf of bread and an insufficient quantity of rancho, which is a kind of half soup, half mush mixture, made of rice beans or Spanish peas cooked with a few scraps of meat. There are seventeen sentinels on duty day and night. There is one sentinel for each three cells, who constantly passes to and fro before the doors. Every night the other sentinels are posted around the outer walls.

At 8 o'clock every night the first sentinel in the line shouts "Sentinel alerta!" and each sentinel in turn cries back "Alerta!" until it comes the turn of the last sentinel, who shouts "Alerta estal!" and this cry is repeated every fifteen minutes until 5 o'clock in the morning. The Journal readers may imagine how it would seem to have some one stand just outside of the screen door of his bedroom and yell at the top of his voice every fifteen minutes during the night, but the prisoners get accustomed to it in a few weeks.

It is, however, very harrowing to any one nervous or sick.

It is but natural that there should be a great deal of sickness, and it is only surprising that there is not more. Every day a squad of men with uncertain step and with ghastly whitish-yellow faces are taken out to the hospital. Frequently some are carried out on a litter. Some of them are brought back with partially restored health, but many have left the prison for the last time.

All the prison officials are kind to the prisoners, and do all in their power to ameliorate their condition. Whatever evils may exist in this prison must be laid at the door of the corrupt and cruel Spanish Government in Cuba.

ONA MELTON.

## SWINDLES THE BRITONS.

New Yorker Raises Money by Representing  
Himself as an Attache of the  
American Embassy.

By Julian Ralph.

(Copyright, 1897, by W. R. Hearst.)

London, April 14.—The United States

Embassy, in Victoria street, Westminster, is on the lookout for a man who is passing worthless checks on West End shopkeepers and representing himself as military attache at the Embassy.

The swindler is known to be a New Yorker who at one time held a good social position. His wife called at one of the banks where he tried to open an account and declared that the woman who was introduced as the man's wife is an interloper. She says that she—the legal wife—has been deserted and left penniless.

The swindler is described as about forty-three years old, large, loosely built, with a strong American accent. He claims an intimate acquaintance with Colonel Hay, the new Ambassador, and it is thought he is trying to impersonate the late military attache, Colonel Ludlow, now in America.

Thrown from a Cable Car.

William H. Dean, thirty-eight years old, residing in Brooklyn, who said he was a merchant and connected with the firm of Veit, Stagg & Co., of No. 6 Beale street, was thrown to the ground yesterday while trying to get on a cable car while it was whirling around the Post Office loop. He was stunned, but otherwise un-  
injured.

Continued on Third Page.

Continued on Second Page.

## SIG. FITZSIMMONS, NEWEST TENOR.

Corbett's Master Attacks the  
Solar Plexus of the  
Tonic Scale.

LANDS ON A NATURAL.

He Will Sing Only to Amuse the  
"Missus and the Baby," at  
Least for the Present.

THE OPERA STILL IN FUTURO.

Objects to "do, ra, me, fa, sol" and  
Shows the Voice Tester What  
He Can Do with a Sen-  
timental Ballad.

It is idle to deplore the closing of the  
Metropolitan Opera House, foolish to

## MRS. DRESSNER HOLDS THE BARN.

The House at Hastings Shut  
Against Her by Her  
Husband.

HE HAS SUED FOR DIVORCE.

When She Went Out His Agent  
Took Possession of Her Home  
and Locked Her Out.

It is literally true that the house of  
Dressner is divided against itself. It is  
true in a double sense. The house of  
Levy Dressner stands on Villard avenue,  
Hastings-on-the-Hudson. Mr. Dressner is  
at daggers point with the wife of his  
bosom—has torn her from his bosom and  
is suing her for divorce. The house proper  
of Levy Dressner is in the hands of his  
agent. Shut out from the house, Mrs.  
Levy Dressner has established herself in  
the barn, and is making herself as com-

## WHAT STRUCK BULLY PATERSON?

Seems to Have Been a Dem-  
ocratic Cyclone That  
Hit Hobart's Home.

G. O. P.'S COLD COMFORT.

Like Canton, the Jersey Town  
Repudiates the Vote of the  
Presidential Race.

OTHER CITIES FALL IN LINE.

Democratic Leaders Attribute Their  
Victory Almost Wholly to  
the Effects of the  
Dingley Bill.

Plurality Plurality  
Last Spring  
Fall Election.

Canton, McKinley's  
Home ..... 937 ..... 500 D.  
Pateron, Hobart's  
home ..... 3,400 R. .... 153 D.  
Not the least important feature of the  
Democratic landslide in New Jersey on  
Tuesday is the fact that Paterson, the home  
of the Vice-President, a manufacturing  
city, befriended by protective tariffs, has  
joined Canton, O., the home of the Presi-  
dent, in repudiating the Republican party.

## HEALTH BOARD TAKES THE HOUSE OF REFUGE.

### Inspector Lynde in Charge and the Managers Uncertain How to Act.

#### Action of the Board Condemned as Hasty and Unjust, and an Appeal Made to the Legislature.

The Board of Health and the managers  
of the House of Refuge, on Randall's  
Island, realized yesterday that they had  
locked horns in a very big controversy.  
On one side there is strong legal authority,  
and on the other great political and social  
influence and wealth. Both parties in the  
contest are becoming angry, and the end  
appears to be a good ways off.

The House of Refuge is under actual  
quarantine. President Orr, of the Society  
for the Reformation of Juvenile Delin-  
quents, and the society's superintendent,  
Elisha M. Carpenter, didn't believe it would  
be done. "There's no epidemic there,"  
said Mr. Orr, and, resting on that assertion,  
he read the Health Board's resolution put-  
ting the place under quarantine skeptically.  
"The disease is either all stamped out or  
isolated," said Superintendent Carpenter.  
"They cannot seriously intend to stop busi-

ness here." But they did. Dr. George S. Lynde, an  
Inspector of the Health Department, ar-  
rived at the House of Refuge yesterday at  
4:15 p. m., and took formal charge of the  
place by authority of the Board. Superin-  
tendent Carpenter was notified that no per-  
son could be admitted into the institution  
until further notice, and that no inmate of  
the female wards, where measles has been  
epidemic, would be allowed to mingle with  
the other inmates. In addition to this man-  
date, there came a letter from Sanitary  
Superintendent Roberts, notifying Mr. Car-  
penter that strict compliance with the quar-  
antine was expected.

The Board of Managers heard of the mat-  
ter early, and several of them appeared at  
the superintendent's office in the after-  
noon. Among these were Clement March,  
Evert Jansen Wendell and William Brad-  
ford, to each of whom the House of Refu-  
ge is a favorite philanthropy. These gen-

lemen were indignant. So was the superin-  
tendent, and so were the assistants and  
keepers and everybody else on the prem-  
ises, excepting only the eight hundred in-  
mates, who cared nothing about the matter.

Charge of Unfairness Made.  
The managers present agreed that the  
Board of Health had not acted fairly in the  
matter, but could not suggest a remedy  
for the evils the Board's order had  
about. "A special meeting of the  
Managers has been called for  
to act on the matter," said Mr. March. "Un-  
less it is impossible to say what will  
then."

A good deal depends upon the Legisla-  
ture," said Mr. Wendell. "Mr. Witherbee,  
who is one of the directors, is trying to  
get our appropriation for betterments  
through. We expect to hear from him any  
day."

Through Mr. Witherbee it was learned  
that the institution last night that the relief  
hoped for from the Legislature was likely  
to be obtained. State Comptroller Rob-  
erts and Mr. Rhinelander Stewart, presi-  
dent of the State Board of Charities, who  
are on record as opposing any further  
building appropriations for the House of  
Refuge, have come to the rescue. They  
worked all day yesterday with the Senate  
Finance Committee to get through an ap-  
propriation of \$37,000 for the crippled in-  
stitution. Comptroller Roberts went so  
far as to assure the managers that if he  
could get any kind of assurance that the  
item would pass he would advance the  
money.

All Agree on One Point.  
In the meantime the House of Refuge is  
in a badly disorganized condition. The  
managers admit the bad sanitary arrange-  
ments, and their inability to properly iso-  
late children when they enter the institu-  
tion or when epidemics prevail. The law  
requires that newly received inmates must  
be kept apart from the other children.  
There is no building on the island that can  
be used for this purpose. The sixty or  
more children affected with trachoma

wash in the common washroom  
they are supplied with separate  
towels. Their isolation is not  
however. The boys who are  
with the disease frequently get  
quarantined sick and have the  
power to convey the contagion.

Dr. W. J. Kynon was the offi-  
cial at the institution yesterday  
said that he will be elected as  
meeting physician of the place at  
present. Two nurses were emp-  
loyed in the place of the two who  
Monday. There are now but four  
in the House of Refuge.

Superintendent Carpenter exhibits  
ten written by him to members of  
Finance Committee, to show that  
heers had been fully advised of the  
tion of affairs at the House of Refuge  
this morning. The superintendent says:  
The House of Refuge is, as you  
know, the oldest reformatory in the  
State, and not in the world. The present  
buildings were erected about forty-five years  
ago and in certain of its appointments the insti-  
tution is antiquated and a detailed  
estimate of the cost of a new building is  
being prepared.

On several occasions during the winter  
schools were closed from one to two weeks  
at a time on account of an insufficient quantity  
of very poor gas, and from time to time the  
darkness, where our 550 inmates sleep, was  
in total darkness, save the flickering light from  
a few candles and lanterns.

The plumbing throughout our buildings is out  
of date. The Board of Health has specified the  
plumbing required by the law. An estimate,  
with specifications complete, has been made by  
a first-class plumber, and we ask for the amount  
of the estimate.

Our present number of inmates is about 800,  
which is nearly double the number of five years  
ago. Our laundry is actually inadequate. The  
amount which we ask for a new laundry is the  
amount specified by the Hospital Supply Com-  
pany, who supplied bandages and a detailed  
estimate.

Our chapel on the third floor has but one exit  
—one door. There should be two additional  
exits, one at each end.  
Explaining this letter, Mr. Carpenter  
said: "I shared the opinion of the managers  
that these improvements should be made.  
Several of the members of the Finance  
Committee, to whom the letter was ad-  
dressed, replied to it in terms of approval.  
No stone has been left unturned," said Mr.  
Carpenter, "to keep the institution in good  
shape."

Board of Health is Severe.  
Despite the explanations of the officials,  
members of the Board of Health and State  
officials blame the managers for negligence  
in their conduct of the institution.

The managers are all wealthy. Alexander  
E. Orr is president; E. W. Dwyer and  
Benjamin B. Atterbury, vice-presidents;  
Edward M. Townsend, treasurer; and Na-  
thaniel Jarvis, Jr., secretary. The man-  
agers include, besides John B. Brown,  
Winthrop, Henry Dudley, Lewis Stuyvesant  
Chandler, Clement March, Frederick Bron-  
son, S. S. Stranahan, William Wall  
Sherman, William Gordon Hamilton and  
other men of great wealth and so-  
ciety. The board is self-perpetu-  
ating, and the State is powerless to chain  
it. Some of the managers believe



grieve over the return of the De Beekes  
to the other side, ridiculous to mourn over  
Melba's desertion of Wagner, for there  
still remains Robert Fitzsimmons, tenor.

Up to noon yesterday Mr. Fitzsimmons  
was the champion middle and heavy weight  
pugilist of the world, but he had his voice  
tested by Doctor Miller, of 121 West  
Thirty-fourth street, shortly before lunch,  
and has decided to go into active vocal  
training and learn to sing.

"Doctor," said Mr. Fitzsimmons, on be-  
ing ushered into the presence of the physi-  
cian, and dropping into an armchair with  
easy, professional grace, "I want my

voice as strong as possible under the circum-  
stances."

Levy Dressner is a travelling salesman  
for a clock manufacturer in this city. His  
wife was formerly a Miss Babbitt. It is  
said she is one of that family of poets  
whose effusions have been usually pub-  
lished in this style:

"This is the lady who walks the rope  
And washes her clothing with B—t's  
soap."

Mr. and Mrs. Dressner are not well  
mated. They have found it impossible to  
agree. For three weeks notices have been  
published by Mr. Dressner, which succinctly  
state he will not be responsible for any  
debts the wife of his bosom may con-  
tract. Mr. Dressner has brought a suit  
for absolute divorce, naming as co-respond-  
ent, Thomas R. Horton, who, formerly  
boarded with the Dressners.

Mrs. Dressner, all unsuspecting, went out  
from the Villard avenue house on Tuesday.  
Her husband, who owns the house and the  
land around it, determined to take posses-  
sion. He put an agent in the house.

"Admit no one, no one, do you under-  
stand?" said Mr. Dressner.  
The agent perfectly understood, and when  
Mrs. Dressner returned to the house she  
could not get in. All the doors were  
locked and all the window shutters were

Continued on Second Page.

Continued on Third Page.

## EVERYTHING GOING WRONG.

Washington, D. C., April 14.—"Everything has been going against us this  
Spring. I don't know, though, that these municipal elections have any special  
significance, but I don't care to discuss that matter or to make any state-  
ment."

FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL WILLIAM J. SEWELL, RE-  
PUBLICAN SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY.

## DUE TO BAD LEGISLATION.

To W. R. Hearst: Washington, April 14.  
I have this evening returned from New Jersey, where I went to vote, and I  
am greatly pleased at the result of the elections. The Democratic victories are  
due to several causes.

First, in my opinion, the Dingley bill, which passed the House and which  
was the greatest monstrosity of its kind ever passed by any Congress, disgraced  
many sensitive men in my State. Even those, like myself, who are favorable to  
a fair and even liberal treatment of the industries of our country, were dis-  
pleased by it. They have simply taken advantage of the first opportunity that  
was presented to show their disapproval of the bill.

In the second place, the Legislature of New Jersey has behaved very badly.  
It has passed partisan measures to benefit the Republicans, but it has enacted no  
measures for the benefit of the people. Therefore, the people have registered  
their disapproval.

The result of the elections, in the third place, shows that the voters are not  
pleased with many of Governor Griggs's appointments. He has disappointed a  
large number of candidates by failing to give them offices, and has disappointed  
others by some of the selections he has made.

These, in my opinion, are the causes which produced the Democratic victo-  
ries in New Jersey.

JAMES SMITH, JR.,  
Democratic United States Senator from New Jersey.